
Human Services Committee

HB 1143

Brief Description: Increasing the availability of safe sex offender housing.

Sponsors: Representatives O'Brien, Pearson, Sells, Ericks, Springer, Ormsby and Simpson.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires the Department of Corrections to study ways of increasing the availability of housing for sex offenders.

Hearing Date: 1/29/09

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092)

Background:

Once an offender has served his or her sentence, the Department of Corrections (DOC) is required to release those offenders from custody. Some offenders do not have a place of residence once they leave custody of the DOC. The offenders are still required to meet the conditions of their release, including contact with their community corrections officers and other affirmative conditions.

As an example, in King County for the 2008 fiscal year (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008), as of June 30, 2008, 100 of the 605 offenders released were flagged as homeless. The DOC defines a homeless person as:

An individual who, at the time of intake or any time thereafter, lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and/or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is: (a) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations or (b) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular living place such as cars, parks, sidewalks, tents, or structures without heat and running water.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Of the 605 released from the DOC, some of whom may not be under community supervision, 72 were required to register as sex offenders. This requirement is based upon either their current or past offenses which were deemed offenses for which registration was required.

Summary of Bill:

The DOC is required to study ways in which to increase the availability of sex offender housing. The study shall identify specific properties and specific types of properties that could be used to house released sex offenders on community custody in a manner that increases community safety. The DOC shall, at a minimum, consider the following:

- the availability of existing DOC facilities that could be used for sex offender housing;
- the availability of other state property that could be used for sex offender housing;
- the availability of federal, local governmental, or private property that could be purchased or leased for purposes of sex offender housing; and
- legal barriers to utilizing, leasing, or acquiring property for the purposes of sex offender housing.

The DOC shall consult with individuals and organizations that have expertise in sex offender community safety, sex offender housing, and the acquisition and use of state property including, law enforcement, victims' advocacy organizations, local governments, local organizations that provide housing for the homeless, community corrections officers, the Department of General Administration, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

The DOC shall report its findings by December 1, 2009. The act expires January 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.